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The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 8 - Civil War Novels

By J. Edward Leithead



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 96 BORDER BOYS LIBRARY

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The Anatomy of Dime Novels

No. 8 - Civil War Novels

By J. Edward Leithead

The Campfire Library (Street & Smith) had just one issue about the Rebellion, #16, Barnaby, the Sandhiller, or, The Mystery of the Yazoo Swamps, by Dr. J. H. Robinson. There was one in Munro's Old Cap Collier Library, #398, Sherman's March to the Sea. And another in Munro's Ten Cent Novels, #4, The Hunted Unionist, or, The Fortunes of a Fugitive, by Illion Constellano (Julius Warren Lewis).

In Street & Smith's New York Weekly were six Civil War stories by Horatio Alger, Jr., almost forgotten and brought to light by the late Wm. M. Burns in his excellent article on the New York Weekly in the Roundup for May 1949. The titles: The Boy Scout. A Tale of Virginia in 1861; A Brave Irish Boy. A Story of Kentucky; The Boy Substitute, or, The Young Wisconsin Volunteers of 1861; The Boy Guide of Rich Mountain, A. Story of West Virginia; Johnny Wilson, or, The Little Drummer Boy of 1861; and A Street Arab at the Seat of War in 1861. See Burns' article for the date of issue of these stories. Alger's Young Captain Jack also had a Civil War background.

There were Civil War stories in Beadle & Company's American Tales: #5, Bob Brant, Patriot and Spy. A Tale of the War in the West. By Edward Willett; #9, The Prisoner of the Mill, or, Captain Howard's Body Guard. By Lt. Colonel Hazeltine; #12, California Joe, or, The Angel of the Wilderness. A Story of the War in Virginia. By Lt. Colonel Hazeltine. Presumably this is the same tale as

Frank Starr's American Novels #192, California Joe by Hazeltine. being foreman of Beadle & Co. Front of the color pictorial wrapper shows bearded infantryman in fatique cap, rifle in bend of arm, seated on a rock. That it doesn't resemble Joseph E. Milner, the "California Joe" we usually mean when speaking that name, may or may not have anything to do with identifying this soldier. This tale presents California Joe, not in his accustomed role of scout and plainsman, but as a foot soldier in The Wilderness campaign during the Civil War. At first glance, this looks like an author's flight of imagination, as the Milner and Forrest biography. "California Joe" (The Caxton Printers) stated that Joe Milner was in the Mexican War but not the Civil War. But, as Don Russell, author of "The Lives and Legends of Buffalo Bill" (University of Oklahoma Press). informed me, there were TWO California Joes, and one of them, "Truman Head, nicknamed 'California Joe' for reasons unexplained, served with Berdan's Sharpshooters, but quit because of ill health about 1862. There is material about him in the regimental history of Berdan's 1st U. S. Sharpshooters; also a picture and article in Frank Moore's 'Civil War in Song and Story,' also published as 'Anecdotes, Incidenta and Poetry of the Civil War'." Author of the dime novel, Lt. Colonel Hazeltine (probably a pseudonym) may have known there was a second California Joe, although he gave him the surname of Ledlie. Was he thinking of "Cali-

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fornia Joe" Head or "California Joe" Milner when he wrote the story? There is another dime novel about which the same question might be asked, since Milner was not a participant in the Civil War—Pluck and Luck #558, Jack Mosby, the Guerrilla King, or, Riding and Raiding in the Rebellion (first published in Boys of New York and Happy Days) and here again California Joe is a prominent character: Head or Milner—which?

Dawley's New War Novels (T. R. Dawley) contained: #1, Mosby, the Guerrilla, #2, Pauline, the Female Spy (Pauline Cushman, of course, and a good picture of her in Federal uniform and fatigue cap, pistol in hand, threatening a Confederate officer, on the cover), #5, Osgood, the Demon #6, Cheatham, or, The Refugee. Swamp Dragoon, #7, Perdita, or, The Demon Refugee's Daughter, #8, Larry, the Army Dog Robber, #10, Hawks Conscript, #11, Clarissa, the Conscript's Bride. Of the eight issues of Dawley's Camp and Fireside Library, #1, Incidents of Camp Life. and #6, Sue Munday, the Guerrilla Spy, were Civil War items, and our editor, Ed LeBlanc, has given us a complete and interesting account of #6 in Dime Novel Roundup for July 1952. "Sue Munday," I believe, figured in a song of the Civil War period.

Two important items appeared in Dawley's Ten Penny Novels: #10. Kennedy, the Incendiary Spy, and #12 Quantrell, the Terror of the West. The Quantrell item was reprinted as #12 of the Popular Series of Fiction, Fancy and Fact (Ivers). Vintage of 1865, the Dawley output seemed to dwell on guerrilla raids, killings, wrecking of trains, etc., rather than the conflict between the regular armies in blue and in gray.

The Sibley Co. publications had some Civil War tales. Their Cricket Library had at least one, #4, Tom Brown's Pluck, or, The Fortunes of a Soldier Boy, by Major A. F. Grant (T. C. Harbaugh). The Gem Library, same publisher, contained the following:

Vol. 1:

#4-Jerry, the Weasel, or, The Boy Spy's Mission. By Louis Bernard.

11—Cavalry Curt: A Story of Sherman's March to the Sea.

35—Slippery Milty, the Scout, or, Running the Gantlet of Island No. 10. By Lt. Henry Downs.

Vol. 2:

#8—General Dixon's Boy Aid, or, Nea Trinkner in the Army. By Lt. W. Atkinson.

20—Harvey Dayre, the Union Spy, or, Tracked for His Life. By Major A. F. Grant (Harbaugh).

26—Captain Jack, the Union Spy, or, In Vicksburg and Out. By Harold

T. Gray.

28-Same as Vol. 1, #4.

Sibley Company's Golden Library published as #43, A Young Blue Jacket, or Enlisted for the War, by Robert E. Morse, and reprinted #4 of the Cricket Library, Tom Brown's Pluck.

Frank Tousey's story papers ran numerous serials of the Civil War, which later were reprinted as complete novels in Pluck and Luck, and one or two in All Around Weekly.

In Young Men of America were published, serially, Nos. 454-461, Bushwhacker Ben, or, The Union Boys of Tennessee, by Ralph Fenton (PL 31, PL 531, PL 1332), Nos. 466-472, Dick Dareall, the Boy Blockade Runner, by Ralph Fenton (PL 723, PL 1508), Nos. 472-480, Happy Jack, the Daring Spy. A Story of the Great Rebellion, by Ralph Morton (PL 35, PL 541, PL 1342), Nos. 486-493, Shiloh Sam, or, General Grant's Best Boy Scout, by Ralph Morton (PL 333, PL 1134).

In Golden Weekly were published, serially, Nos. 3-10, The Drummer Boy's Secret, or, Oath-bound on the Battlefield, by Ralph Fenton (PL 377, PL 1178), Nos. 11-18, The Boy Balloon Spies, or, The Sky Scouts of the Rebellion, by Captain George Granville (not reprinted in Pluck & Luck). Nos. 66-73, The Signal Service Boys, or, Fighting Above the Clouds, by Captain George Granville (PL 565, PL 1366), Nos. 76-84, General Sherman's Boy Spy, or, The March to the Sea.

A Thrilling Story of the Civil War, by Captain George Granville (PL 392, PL 1193), Nos. 117-123, Sharpshooter Sam, the Yankee Boy Spy, or, Winning His Shoulder Straps, by Ralph Morton (PL 350, PL 1151).

In Boys of New York were published, serially, Nos. 730-737, Gunboat Dick, or, Death Before Dishonor, by N. S. Wood (PL 178, PL 980), Nos. 769-776, The Boy Cavalry Scout, or, Life in the Saddle. A Thrilling Story of the Civil War, by Kit Clyde (PL 290, PL 1091), Nos. 816-822, Up from the Ranks, or, From Corporal to General. A Story of the Great Rebellion, by Kit Clyde (PL 307, PL 1108), Nos. 965-972, The Boy Captain of the 71st New York, or, Fighting for the Old Flag. A True Story of the Rebellion, by N. S. Wood (PL 647, PL 1448), Nos. 994--, Jack Mosby, the Guerrilla King, or, Riding and Raiding in the War of the Rebellion. The Story of a Boy Spy of the Union Army, by Col. Ralph Fenton. This is also the story in which California Joe (Head or Milner) plays a prominent part. It began in Boys of New York and was concluded in Happy Days (PL 558, PL 1359).

The Boys of New York Pocket Library, #190, was General Grant's Boy Scout, or, The Hero of Five Forks by Ralph Morton, which also appeared in the Boys' Star Library #121 and All Around Weekly #35.

In Happy Days were published, serially, Nos. 35-43, Loyal to the Last or, Fighting for the Stars and Stripes, by Frank Forrest (PL 450 PL 1251), Nos. 183-190, The Gun Boat Boys, or, Running the Batteries at Vicksburg by Ralph Morton (PL 591, PL 1293).

When Frank Tousey replaced 84 issues of Wide Awake Library (outlaw stories about the James Boys Jack Sheppard, Dick Turpin, Claude Duval, etc.), the substitute tales were nearly all concerned with the Civil War; to mention a few, #30, Infantry Dave, the Young Scout of the Wilderness, #31, The Eagle Bearer, or The Hero of the Regiment, #33, Cav-

alry Jack at Champion Hill, #40, Eely Jim, or, A Yankee Boy in the Rebellion, #54, Forward, or, The Terrible March to Richmond, #62, Union Dick, the Yankee Spy. A Tale of the Great Rebellion, #64, The Potomac Detective, #70, Goldburn, the Girl Guerrilla. A Story of the War in the West, #72, Daring Dave, the Boy Rifleman.

A lot of these were from Tousey's Five Cent Library, the Cavalry Jack and Union Dick stories having as their setting many historic battlegrounds: #27, Cavalry Jack at Corinth, #29. Union Dick in the Seven Days' Fight, #31, Cavalry Jack at Murfreesboro. #42. Union Dick at Gettysburg, etc. The authors were Col. Ralph Fenton, Richard R. Montgomery, Ralph Morton, Philip Murdock and Percy B. St. John, all pen names as far as I know. Montgomery was a nom. of Francis Worcester Doughty, creator of Old King Brady, and we can be sure that his Civil War stories, like everything else he wrote, were second to none.

There were just two color cover weeklies devoted to the subject of the Civil War, only one lasting over a year, the other much less than that.

Red, White and Blue (Street and Smith) was a 7x10 weekly, "Army and Navy war stories of the bravery of boy heroes who wore the blue and the gray," running to 59 issues, 1896 to 1897. The "Beverly Kennon" who signed these stories was Walter A. Morris, and he gave them non-partisan treatment, putting hero Phil Stirling in the Union Cavalry-#2, Trooper Phil, or, The Adventures of a Young Recruit, #8, Phil at Bull Run, or, The Charge of the Fire Zouaves, #23, Trooper Phil's Ruse, or, With Grant in Tennessee, #40, The Girl Spy of Richmond, or, Phil's Mysterious Comrade - AND his cousin, hero Ralph Stirling, in the Confederate Navy-#7, Ralph in Action, or, 'Tween Decks on the Merrimac, #15, Ralph's First Command, or, The Cruise of the Destroyer, #17, Ralph on a Blockade Runner, #21, Ralph on the Alabama, or, Fighting a Mutiny.

Red, White and Blue, after #59.

became Adventure Weekly, with Phil and Ralph, not a day older apparently, fighting in a war that occurred forty years later, the Boxer uprising in China. Three Phil Stirling stories were reprinted in Do and Dare, #52, Phil Stirling, #58, Phil Stirling's Loyalty, #65, Phil Stirling's Secret Commission.

The shorter-lived Tousey publication, Blue and Gray Weekly, Stories of Brave Northern and Southern Boys in the Civil War, regular 8x11 format, was a better series historically and pictorially than Red, White and Blue. Tousey's finest artist, whose name, so far as I know, is still unknown to Dime Novel Roundup subscribers, did all the covers. To my mind, they are the best war scenes ever to appear on any dime (or nickel) novel cover. And the stories, by George W. Brown, matched the covers in excellence. Again we have the non-partisan treatment, old friends Jack Clark and Will Prentiss taking sides with the Union and the Confederacy respectively.

This weekly, and All Around, both folding early, were launched by Lu Senarens when he was editing Tousey's weeklies and their failure must have been a big disappointment to him. Blue and Gray Weekly, starting publication in August, 1904, lasted only 32 issues. It had some very good titles, too, everything to make you think it should have lasted longer. although, possibly, not as long as the extremely picturesque Liberty Boys of '76, who fought lobsterbacks, Tories and Indians. Ralph Smith, in an article, "Novels of Short Life," published in his Happy Hours Magazine for September-October 1933, may have put hi finger on the exact reason for Blue and Gray Weekly's lack of success when he said of it: "The Civil War had long since ended, and it was hard to get enthusiastic over a family squabble no matter how fine the stories were."

Here are those exceptional issues (you'll be lucky if you can find any of the 32 numbers, though there are a few): #9, Out With Grant, or, The

Boys in Blue in Tennessee, #10, At Fair Oaks, or, The Boys in Gray Winning Out, #13, At Fort Donelson, or, The Boys in Blue's Great Charge, #14, Held at Bay, or, The Boys in Gray Baffled, #15, At Pittsburg Landing, or, The Boys in Blue's Createst Battle, #16, Leading the Line, or, The Boys in Gray's Best Work, #25, Saddle and Sabre, or, The Boys in Blue's Hard Ride, #26, At Cedar Mountain, or, The Boys in Gray With Stonewall Jackson, #29, Up the Yazoo, or, The Boys in Blue With Sherman.

"General James A. Gordon" was the pseudonym used by Tousey on most of the war stories reprinted in Pluck and Luck. I have mentioned the numbers of these reprints (with their usual fine color covers) in the listing of the Tousey serial papers, Young Men of America, Golden Weekly, Boys of New York and Happy Days, which were the source of these stories.

Street & Smith contributed little in Civil War tales during the era of color cover novels besides Red, White and Blue. I know of one stray in Brave and Bold—#86, Prisoners of War, or, Jack Dashaway's Rise from the Ranks by "Old Tecumseh." There may have been others in Brave and Bold. But don't forget it was Street & Smith who published that grand series, The War Library, in the era of black-and-white novels.

The End

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FRONT COVER SCENES REPEATED By Gerald J. McIntosh

On the front cover of Tip Top No. 70, dated Aug. 14, 1897, we see Hans Dunnerwust literally being lifted from the saddle while riding "the hurricane deck of a wild Texas bucking bronco and exclaiming: "Dot proncho must haf India-rubber his back in!", while an amusing crowd of Frank's chums and local cowboys of the area look at Hans' wildly gesticulating hands and arms and shout with laughter.

We now have the front cover of Tip Top No. 732 before us, dated April 23, 1910, almost thirteen years later. Again we have Hans on the back of another pitching cayuse, apparently holding onto the saddle-horn for "dear life." Again, some amused "punchers" are watching him with keen interest as the Dutch boy exclaims: "I toldt you dot horse couldt ride me undt he will prove it, if he kills me in doing so!"

These two front covers are very interesting, very similar in theme, much alike and amusing to study.

Now, friends, let's view the scene on front cover of Tip Top No. 282, date of Sept. 7, 1901. Here we see Old Joe Crowfoot who had only joined the already large list of characters in the Merriwell stories a few short weeks previous to the issuance of this particular number. Dick Merriwell had practically been "raised" and brought up with Old Joe as a sort of guide and watchman over him in his early youth, and Old Joe loved Dick about just as much as he would have his own son. The ways of baseball were almost unknown and new to Old Joe. but he had some rudiments of the game and here we see him "making medicine" at the home plate and incanting his god to lead Dick to victory in the game that is ahead of him.

We now see New Tip Tops 106 and 107 of New Tip Top issued in August of 1914 practically thirteen years later. Both front covers show Old Joe in the vicinity of home plate. Particularly on the cover of NTT 106 is Old Joe showing his anxiety, and evidently invoking the "Great Spirit" to carry "Injun Heart," (Dick M.), to another victory in the sport that was so beloved to young Merriwell.

All these covers are remarkably interesting and it is odd that they should appear so many long years apart, with the same theme and that they are so much alike in their appearance.

WANTED

Tip Top #27

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BUCKSKIN BILL RIDES AGAIN DOWN THE DIME NOVEL TRAIL

By An Anonymous Author

The scout is alert, his eagle eye Is keen;

He is scouting in the wilderness Midst a beautiful wild scene.

His raiment is made of buckskin,
His saddle and bridle is buckskin
too.

The mustang he rides is of buckskin color

He is on the trail of hostile Sioux.

He is traveling through a canyon, Clad with rugged rocks on either side;

He is passing through the mountains In a narrow deep divide.

Everything is quiet, Everything is still;

In this magic land of mystic wonders
The scout is Buckskin Bill.

This is a rugged rocky region
Filled with wild ferocious beasts
That are hiding in their lair;
So the scout proceeds with caution,
stealth and care.

These mountains are enfested
With savage hostile redskins
And desperadoes dwell there too;
These desperadoes are known as
road agents
The redskins are the Indian tribe.

The redskins are the Indian tribe of Sioux.

To be about in this land of wonders, Gives this frontiersman a happy thrill:

For he is a dime novel, hero, The scout is Buckskin Bill.

As the scout, rounds a ledge in the canyon,

He meets a mountain lion and a grizzly bear;

He unslings his trusty Winchester rifle.

And slays both the lion and the grizzly right there.

Then as the scout proceeds further.

A band of road agents comes into sight;

Crack, crack, sounds the scout's rifle.

Then there is a desperate fight.

And penetrating still further

A party of savage hostile redskins In war paint charge the scout with angry lust:

When the burn black powder smoke had cleared away

It was found that the redskins had bit the dust.

This was a dime novel adventure,
Filled with wild west thrill.
In this exciting exploit,
The scout is Buckskin Bill.

The End

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Leithead: Your articles for the Round-up are very good, and I see that little by little the publication is getting more members. I would like to see this grow into a big thing, eventually it could, I hope so. In one of your articles you mention the Paul Jones Weekly. That publication went to 20 numbers and that is the only complete set in nickel novels that I have, including No. 20. Since reading your articles on some of the boys books, I did get some of them, including the last number of the Deerfoot Series by Ellis. I liked the story so much, I am trying to get the rest, and believe me, that isn't easy. Frank Schott, Route 1, Box 74, Suring, Wis. 54174. (Ed. Note. This is the first time I have had definite information that Paul Jones Weekly printed 20 numbers. 19 has been the accepted number in the past. Can anyone offer Mr. Schott some Deerfoot Series for sale?)

Dear Mr. Leithead: It is always a pleasure to read your fine articles in the Roundup. The Revolutionary War as a source of fiction was always my favorite reading, and it must have been for others too, as the amount of items covering it appeared in your fine article. I hope that we all will have the pleasure of reading many more articles by you. May I suggest

you doing an article on pen names giving a list of all that you are familiar with both in the nickel novel, pulp and boys books fields. This I'm sure would be of great interest to all subscribers who are deeply interested in this field.—Stanley A. Pachon, Bethlehem, Pa.

NEWSY NEWS By Ralph F. Cummings

Don S. Learnard (H. H. Bro. #8) says Florida is the only place to live. He loves it down in Bradenton, and wants me, ye editor, to pull up stakes and head for down south—that would be nice, but having no car to travel around in, I guess I may as well stay up here and come to think of it, Florida and Tennesse are the only 2 states and the city of Washington, D. C., this side of the Mississippi river that I ve never been to, but who knows, maybe some day I'll have a chance to visit.

Carl Linville was down to his old stamping grounds at Paris, Ky., in July—says where he used to buy the old dime and nickel novels of long ago is still in business, and they sell comic books now. Says he can vision way back in 1904 to 1912 was the hey day till after World War I. then they started to fade away. Says he had piles of colored cover novels, which he says, if he only had today—

Peter Scollo, 24 Earle St., Norwood, Mass. 02062, has quite a lot of old comic books that he would like to trade for numbers he needs. He also wants Secret Service, Liberty Boyn of 76, James Boys Weeklies and other scarce novels, if he can get them. Send lists of what you have.

Did you know that Vol. 1, No. 1, of Tip Top Library Nos. 1 to end of No. 45 all came under that name from April 18, 1896 to Feb. 20, 1897? Tip Top Weekly Vol. 1 No. 46 to 851 started Feb. 27th, 1897 ended #857 August 3rd. 1912. First number was No. 1, Frank Merriwell's Schooldays.

H. L. (Buck) Wilson, formerly of Alliance, Ohio, is now living down in

Uvalde, Texas, 78801 (404-1 North Wood St.), H. H. Bro. #19. 80 miles west of San Antonio, says he's been wanting to come to Texas country for years—says it's a nice dry climate and plenty of good hunting, such as deer and wild turkey, in the hills north of his place there are plenty of wild pig and bob cats. Says he hasn't been active in old novels, etc., for years, but hopes some day to get started again.

John E. Clark, 260 Wade St., Bridgeport, Conn. 06604-H. H. Bro. #26 sure has had a very tough time of it in July and August when he had to go back to the hospital. Had half of his stomach, gall bladder, appendix and an occasional hernia corrected, and while he was recuperating, he was reading his favorite dime and nickel novels (who says dime novels never helped anyone? The party who said so didn't know what he was talking about.) The dime novel sure has helped in lots and lots of ways. It's helped a lot of us in various ways, and still is. Long live the memory of dime novels!

Jack R. Schorr, 853 So. Lemon St., Anaheim, Calif. 92805 is on the trail for boys hard cover books, such as "The Racer Boys" by Clarence Young and "The White Ribbon Boys" also "Y. M. C. A. Boys" Series. Can any one help him?

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup, Nos. 1 to 237, some reprints, 12 for \$1.00 or all for \$21. Sent postpaid. You also get Dime Novel Catalogue, Birthday No. 2, indexes, #1 Pioneer and Scouts of the West.

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